

Influence of family environment and locus of control on mental health of adolescents of a displaced village

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ABSTRACT

The present study is undertaken to understand the influence of family environment and locus of control on the mental health of adolescents living in a displaced village. Displaced village is selected from East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. A total sample of 113 adolescents in the age group of 13 to 16 years studying 8th to 10th standards are taken for the study. Mental health inventory (Manjuvani, 2000), Levenson's scale for locus of control and family environment scale (Bhatia and Chadda, 1996) are used for data collection. Multiple regression analysis is used to understand the influence of family environment and locus of control factors on mental health of adolescents. Among the 8 family environment subscales control is one variable that contributed to assets component of mental health and also contributed to total mental health of adolescents. Active recreation orientation is the other subscale of family environment that contributed to liabilities component of the mental health of adolescents. Out of the 3 areas of locus of control, powerful others area predicted variance in liabilities component of the mental health and total mental health of adolescents of a displaced village.

Key Words : Adolescents, Displaced village, Family environment, Locus of control, Mental health

INTRODUCTION

Development-induced displacement is forcible migration of population from their native village and resettling them in another place for the purpose of setting up of industries or for infrastructure development. The different factors of displacement might influence all the members of the family especially adolescent children. Adolescence is an age of rapid growth and characterised by developmental challenges. As adolescents seek new experiences, they are likely to be exposed to various potentially problematic or dangerous influences. Appropriate support and guidance are very much needed by the adolescents from parents as well as society.

The behaviour of any individual cannot be attributed to a single influencing factor. An adolescent's behaviour can be determined by both heredity factors and environmental influences like parents, peers and personal experiences that lead him to adopt attitudes and beliefs.

Family environment factors like relationship between parents, parent child relationships, child rearing practices, parental discipline, family size, sibling order, family structure as nuclear or joint, parental education, socioeconomic status and several other factors have significant impact on the development of adolescent.

Locus of control is one of the important personality factors emerging during adolescence. In psychological terms, peoples' locus of control refers to their perceptions about who or what is ultimately responsible for the course of their lives and the positive and negative experiences they have. Locus of control can be broken down into two distinct subdivisions, though most individuals fall somewhere along the continuum between the two extremes internal locus of control and external locus of control.

All the above-mentioned factors of family environment and factors of personality development might be affected in a displacement village. As displacement

experience creates physical and psychological insecurities in the affected families, growing children are the most vulnerable group that might be affected by all these influences. Hence this study attempted to understand the influence of family environment and locus of control on mental health of adolescents in a displaced village.

Objectives:

1. To find out the contribution of family environment and locus of control factors in the prediction of assets component of mental health of adolescents of displaced village.
2. To find out the contribution of family environment and locus of control factors in the prediction of liabilities component of mental health of adolescents of displaced village.
3. To find out the contribution of family environment and locus of control factors in the prediction of mental health of adolescents of displaced village.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The study is carried out in R&R Colony (displaced village) U.Kothapalli Mandal of East Godavari district. The sample taken are in the age group of 13 to 16 years studying 8th, 9th and 10th standards in government high schools. The sample comprised of 113 adolescents, 45 boys and 68 girls.

Tools:

1. Mental health inventory (Manjuvani, 2000)
2. Levenson’s scale for locus of control (Levenson, 1973)
3. Family environment scale (Bhatia and Chadha, 1993)

Data collection:

The principals of selected coeducational government schools were contacted, and permission was taken for data collection. The mental health inventory, Levenson’s scale for locus of control and family environment scale are administered on 8th, 9th and 10th class students. Necessary instructions were given regarding the answering of the test items. Scoring was done according to the instructions given in the manual. The data obtained is statistically analysed using multiple regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mental Health Inventory consists of 2 components - assets and liabilities. High score on assets components signifies the presence of assets to a high degree, whereas high score on liabilities component implies absence or freedom from liabilities and both scores together express the total mental health of the individual. The following are the independent and dependent variables taken for regression analysis.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Family Environment	
1. Cohesion	
2. Expressiveness	
3. Conflict	1. Assets
4. Acceptance and Caring	2. Liabilities
5. Independence	3. Mental health
6. Active Recreational Orientation	
7. Organisation	
8. Control	
Locus of Control	
1. Powerful Others	
2. Chance Control	
3. Individual Control	

Prediction of assets component of adolescents of displaced villages from family environment and locus of control factors:

Stepwise multiple regression analyses are carried out to examine the contribution of family environment and locus of control factors of adolescents of displaced village on their assets component, liabilities component and total mental health.

Assets are the attitudes and skills that contribute to a sense of wellbeing which support a person to realize their fullest potential. These assets need to be encouraged and nourished to maintain positive mental health in children. From Table 1 it is evident that control is the only variable that entered regression analysis in the prediction of assets component of adolescents of displaced village. The R value is 0.352 suggesting that the strength of the relation is 35.2 per cent. The R is significant at 0.01 level of significance (F=15.699). The R² value is 0.123 means that the contribution of control in the prediction of variance in assets component is 12.3 percent.

The control dimension of family environment is dependent on the parenting style used by the parents.

Table 1 : Prediction of Assets component of Adolescents of Displaced village from Family Environment Dimensions and Locus of Control Areas

Step no.	Independent Variables	R	R ²	SE for R	F value for R	Beta	% of Variance
1.	Control	0.352	0.123	0.069	15.699	0.352	12.39

According to Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), there are two types of parents. First type are anxious parents who experience separation anxiety and use control to keep them in a close and dependent relation. The second type of parents communicate their children that they love them only if they meet an ideal standard. Either of these types of control likely to make the adolescents vulnerable to depression and anxiety. Parenting that incorporates realistic expectations and unconditional positive regard is likely to produce well-adjusted adolescents.

Prediction of liabilities component of adolescents of displaced villages from family environment and locus of control factors:

Kaur (2001) studied home environment in context to mental health. His study revealed that a positive significant relationship exists between the two variables. Brahmhatt and Shital (2016) study also proves that a positive correlation exists between family environment and mental health of adolescents. Table 2 shows the prediction of liabilities component of mental health of adolescents of displaced village from family environment and locus of control factors.

Mental health liabilities are the threats that create obstacles to emotional and personality development. These liabilities are to be identified and addressed to promote mental health. In the prediction of liabilities powerful others area of locus of control entered into the regression analysis in the first step and accounted 4.1 percent of variance. Persons with internal locus of control are comparatively healthier mentally than persons having external locus of control. Persons having external locus of control tend to have more anxiety and low confidence when compared to persons with internal locus of control (Wallston, 2005).

It is quite evident from the findings that external locus of control contributed 4 percent of variance in the prediction of liabilities component of mental health among the adolescents of a displaced village. The low socio-economic conditions of the family and the uncertainty of events happening in the displaced village tend to influence the adolescents’ thinking process. They might believe that things are happening according to the wishes of the influential people of the village, so that they could limit their efforts and wait for the results to happen through powerful people. Over a period of time these adolescents get habituated of this type of thinking process and their locus of control tends to become external. An earlier study conducted by Brosschat *et al.* (1994) revealed that the powerful others locus of control is strongly related to passive coping strategies. The present study also demonstrates an association between the two variables – powerful others locus of control and liabilities.

The variable that entered regression analysis in the second step is active recreational orientation, one of the subscales of family environment in the prediction of liabilities of adolescents of displaced village. Spending quality time together with family members in entertainment, participating in recreational activities like going to movies and parties, attending functions at relatives/friends’ homes etc. improve the bonding between the family members and enhance the social skills of the adolescents. Dasgupta and Sain (2015) found that active recreational orientation is one of the predicting factors in development of life skills in adolescent age group.

Street and James (2017) opined that participation of adolescents in sports and other recreational activities can be a curative or preventive strategy to combat mental illness and promote mental health. Findings demonstrate

Table 2 : Prediction of Liabilities of Adolescents of Displaced Village from Family Environment Dimensions and Locus of Control Areas

Step no.	Independent Variables	R	R ²	SE for R	F value for R	Beta	% of Variance
1.	Powerful Others	0.202	0.041	0.063	4.75	-0.202	4.1
2.	Active Recreational Orientation	0.280	0.078	0.0595	4.70	0.221	4.5
						0.195	3.4

Table 3 : Prediction of Mental Health of Adolescents of Displaced village from Family Environment Dimensions and Locus of Control Areas

Step no.	Independent Variables	R	R ²	SE for R	F value for R	Beta	% of Variance
1.	Control	0.285	0.081	0.101	9.82	0.285	8.13
2.	Powerful Others	0.336	0.113	0.098	7.042	0.300	8.58
						-0.180	2.78

the significance of active recreational orientation dimension on liabilities component. Hence, it is crucial for the parents of displaced village, to provide opportunities of recreation to the growing adolescents for the benefit of their positive mental health.

Prediction of mental health of adolescents of displaced villages from family environment and locus of control factors:

Research proves that better perceived family functioning was related to better psychological well-being (Pegah, 2014). Table 3 gives the prediction of mental health with family environment and locus of control.

The results of Table 3 reveals that the first variable that entered the regression analysis is control dimension of family environment. The strength of the relation between the dependent and independent variable is 28.5 per cent. The value of R² is 0.081 which shows that contribution of control in the prediction of variance in mental health of adolescents of displaced village is 8.12 per cent.

In a displaced village the external influences play an important role on growing children. These influences are mostly characterised by conflict and agitations. In these circumstances parents of displaced village appear to exercise more control on their children in adolescent age to minimise external influences. Shor (2000) in his study observed that parent's emphasis on control will be more in low-income deprived neighbourhood, because of the perceived risk factors in the environment.

The next variable that entered in the second step of regression analysis is 'powerful others' area of locus of control. The two variables put together could explain about 11.3 per cent of the variance in the prediction of mental health of adolescents of displaced village, where powerful others variable could explain 2.75 per cent of variance.

Both control and powerful others factors predicted the mental health of adolescents of a displaced village. These results are in line with Walston (1982) study findings that external locus of control which includes chance control and powerful others is positively correlated with

depression and vice versa. Recent researches also support that individuals who have an internal locus of control are exhibiting better mental health in comparison with individuals with external locus of control (Shojaee and French, 2014).

Conclusion:

Findings reveal that there is a significant influence of both family environment and locus of control factors on mental health of adolescents of displaced village. Control and active recreation orientation of family environment and powerful others area of locus of control emerged as significant predictors of the mental health of adolescents. It is important to create awareness to parents on the importance of parenting and creating a supportive environment for children. It is also recommended to encourage adolescents to strengthen their personalities towards developing self-confidence and internal locus of control. School programs should play a proactive role in organising personality development programs.

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